



# Pontiac Fever

## What is Pontiac fever?

Pontiac fever is a mild flu-like illness. It is caused by *Legionella* bacteria, which can also cause Legionnaire's Disease.

## What are the symptoms of Pontiac fever?

The symptoms of Pontiac fever can include fever, chills, fatigue, headaches, and muscle aches, but not pneumonia. The fever can be as high as 102°F to 105°F. These symptoms will go away on their own without treatment. People with Pontiac fever usually recover in two to five days.

## Where are *Legionella* bacteria found?

*Legionella* bacteria are found in natural and manmade water sources and in any type of water system. The bacteria grow best in warm water (77°F to 113°F).

*Legionella* bacteria have been found in creeks, ponds, and even potting soil. The bacteria are common in warm stagnant water. Examples of warm stagnant water are large plumbing systems, hot water tanks, cooling towers, evaporative condensers for large air conditioning systems, decorative fountains, and hot tubs. Home and automobile air conditioners are not considered sources for *Legionella* bacteria.

## How do you get Pontiac fever?

People get Pontiac fever after breathing in mist from water that contains *Legionella* bacteria. The disease is not spread from person to person.

## How soon do symptoms occur?

The period between exposure to the bacteria and onset of symptoms for Pontiac fever is five to 66 hours, but most often 24 to 48 hours.

## Who can get Pontiac fever?

People of any age can get Pontiac fever. People at higher risk of getting sick are:

- Older people (people over 50 years of age)
- Current or former smokers
- People with chronic lung disease
- People with a weak immune system (diabetes, cancer, kidney failure, etc.)
- People taking medicine that weakens their immune system (steroids, chemotherapy, etc.)

Due to Pontiac fever being a mild illness it is possible that many cases may go undiagnosed.

## What is the treatment for Pontiac fever?

Usually, people with Pontiac fever recover on their own in two to five days without treatment or further health problems.

## References:

1. American Public Health Association. Control of Communicable Diseases Manual, 19th Edition, 2008. Washington DC.
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Legionellosis Resource Site. Accessed on 30 July 2014 at <http://www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html>.